

POLICE/SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT		GENERAL ORDERS	
SUBJECT: McGruff House Program		NUMBER: 2-37	
EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 1999		REVIEW DATE:	
AMENDS/SUPERSEDES: GO 2-37, October 1993		APPROVED: _____ Chief of Police/Sheriff	
CALEA STANDARDS:		VLESPC STANDARDS:	

NOTE

This order is for internal use only, and does not enlarge an officer's civil or criminal liability in any way. It should not be construed as the creation of a higher standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party claims. Violations of this directive, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by this department, and then only in a non-judicial administrative setting.

INDEX WORDS

Crime prevention
McGruff House

I. POLICY

McGruff House is a residentially-based program where a child in immediate emotional or physical danger or who is in immediate fear of abuse or neglect may seek temporary refuge and assistance. The policy of the department is to promote the McGruff House Program using department employees and approved volunteers to develop and implement procedures, monitor and report program progress, and carry out activities to ensure the safety of children.

II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this order is to set forth procedures for the sponsorship, recruitment, training, recordkeeping, monitoring, and duties and responsibilities of participants in the McGruff House Program.

III. PROCEDURES

A. Sponsorship

The chief/sheriff shall designate a McGruff House Program officer (MHPO). The MHPO shall:

1. Assist the sheriff/chief of police in obtaining an agreement with the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) to sponsor the program by filing a letter of intent to participate.
2. Follow regulations promulgated by DCJS regarding program establishment and operations. DCJS administers the program and offers ongoing technical assistance to local law enforcement agencies which sponsor the program.
3. Develop internal policy guidelines which shall include procedures on participant background investigations, training, monitoring, and record keeping. These minimum requirements may be exceeded at the option of the department. All guidelines shall be developed in compliance with regulations promulgated by DCJS.
4. File the annual report required by DCJS by February 1st of each year.
5. Provide knowledgeable, instructive advice to the public concerning the program.
6. Provide block captains in Neighborhood Watch areas with the names and addresses of participating McGruff Houses.
7. Incorporate GO 2-18 (Crime Prevention) into program activities.

B. General duties and responsibilities

All sworn personnel involved with the McGruff House Program shall:

1. Receive periodic training in the purpose and goals of McGruff House, all appropriate department orders, and their responsibilities for assisting the program. Supervisors shall ensure that their subordinates are well acquainted with program principles and procedures.
2. Make referrals to the appropriate resource either within or outside the department in response to requests which exceed their knowledge or capability to accommodate.
3. Report activities undertaken on the appropriate forms.

C. Duties and responsibilities of participants

1. Persons interested in participating in the program must apply directly to the sponsoring law enforcement agency.

2. All persons over the age of 18 who wish his or her home to be designated a McGruff House must pass a background investigation which is conducted by the sponsoring law enforcement agency. The investigation shall include criminal history records checks, child and domestic abuse complaints, a check of outstanding arrest warrants at the local, state, and federal level, and an on-site neighborhood check of no fewer than three households in the immediate area.
3. Requests to participate shall be refused to any applying residence where any resident has been convicted of a felony, a narcotic drug law offense, or any domestic or child abuse related charges, or any charge involving an offense committed against a juvenile.
4. A McGruff House sign, issued by the National McGruff House Program and available from DCJS, is given to each designated McGruff House. This sign is the only sign authorized for use in the McGruff House Program, and each sign has a unique serial number. The sign is to be displayed at all times in a prominent location so that it can be seen from the most frequently traveled public area adjoining the property of the residence.
5. The participating residences must have a working telephone which can be used to make emergency or referral telephone calls.
6. Participants must have a valid homeowner's or renter's liability insurance policy in effect.
7. Participants provide the following assistance to children who call upon them for aid:
 - a. Telephone appropriate authorities for help.
 - b. Reassure and aid children who are frightened or lost.
 - c. Assist children who have medical emergencies by getting appropriate assistance.
 - d. Assist children who are in immediate fear of becoming victims of personal crimes or thefts, or who are in immediate fear of child abusers, gangs, or bullies.
 - e. Immediately report to the law enforcement agency details of all incidents where children request assistance.
 - f. Immediately report crimes and suspicious activities to law enforcement officials.

8. McGruff House Program participants are not to do any of the following for children requesting assistance:
 - a. Personally provide First Aid or administer medication, except in case of emergencies, and then only if qualified.
 - b. Act as an escort service or provide transportation.
 - c. Enforce laws.
 - d. Provide baby-sitting or child care services.
 - e. Provide food or beverages.

IV. MCGRUFF HOUSE PROGRAM ASSISTANCE

Assistance in promoting the McGruff House Program may be obtained from the following:

- A. Virginia Crime Prevention Center
Department of Criminal Justice Services
805 East Broad Street, 10th Floor
Richmond, Virginia 23219
(804) 786-4000
(804) 371-8981 (FAX)
<www.dcjs.state.va.us/crimeprevention/index.htm>
- B. National McGruff House Program
66 E. Cleveland Avenue
Salt Lake City, Utah 84115
(801) 486-8768
(801) 486-8815 (FAX)